

Childhood Education

Who Will Help Me?

February 1953

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For Those
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To Stimulate Thinking
Rather Than
Advocate Fixed Practice

1952-53: The Challenge
of Today's Children

Childhood Education

Next Month—

"What Do We Do About Our Limitations?" is the topic for March. Are our limitations a burden or a challenge is the question of the editorial.

"Knowing How and When We Grow As Adults" is discussed by Carroll Carlson, M.D. Teachers must know how to live "in the world today" not just teach it as one more subject, is the viewpoint expressed by Margaret Cormack.

John Brooks tells how experimental schools help overcome educational limitations.

Two articles on "gifted" children will stimulate further thinking on the topic. Paul Witty discusses what is meant by gifted children. Bernard Haake explains an enrichment program developed in one system.

The second section is devoted to number concepts with articles by William Martin, Emma Plank, and Lorraine Sherer.

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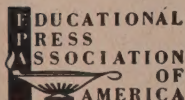
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ALIDA H. HISLE, *Advertising Mgr.*

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We are not alone
unless we choose to be.

Photo by Eva Luoma, Weirton, W. Va.

We Are Not Alone

Unless We Choose To Be

A MAN, THEY SAY, IS JUDGED BY THE COMPANY HE KEEPS and by the values he holds. Parents and teachers, because of their unique responsibility for children and youth and because they expect more of themselves than they can accomplish alone, need to ponder such challenging questions as: "What do I really value in life?" and "With and for whom am I working?"

That we are not alone in the convictions we hold is basic to our peace of mind. But, with whom we share these values is essential in appraising them. The answer is preliminary to acceptance of help and assumption of responsibility. What then do we believe? Who shares our belief? With and for whom are we working?

Perhaps our most basic conviction is that of respect for the essential worth and dignity of every human being. It is at once the purpose and measure of human society and relationships. In this conviction parents and teachers are not alone. We recognize this conviction as basic in the entire Hebraic-Christian ethics. We know also that it is essential in the humanistic movement since the days of the Greek republic. It is an integral part of such important documents as the Declaration of Independence, our Federal Constitution, and the Bill of Rights. It is supported by law, reflected in the scientific method, and corroborated by recent research. Clearly, in this basic conviction we are not alone!

The corollary of this conviction specifically accords the child recognition and respect as a human being. Worth and dignity are implicit in the Hebraic-Christian ethics and nowhere denied because of under-ageness in the Bill of Rights or other basic documents. Yet, in practice, such consideration for children appears to be limited to comparatively recent years. Progress in this respect must be credited to many: to pediatricians, welfare workers, teachers, parents, sociologists, psychologists, and to others whose studies reveal the uniqueness, the creativity, and the worth of children.

As Jane Addams so aptly said: "The most precious moment in human development is the young creature's assertion that he is unlike any other human being, and has an individual contribution to make to the world. Variation from the established type is at the root of all change, the only possible basis for progress, all that keeps life from growing unprofitably stale and repetitious."

IN OUR BASIC CONVICTION AND IN THE SEARCH FOR EFFECTIVE WAYS FOR promoting the best interests of children and youth, teachers are in the midst of many sincere workers. We alone cannot educate our children. We can only teach and guide them. Truly, Education is and should be the concern of Everyman.—*VIOLA THEMAN, professor of education, Northwestern University, Evanston, Illinois.*

Five Towns ACE Branch Looks at its Human Resources

WHO WILL HELP ME?

Most of us recognize pretty definite needs when we meet groups of children today. Sources of help are sought when a definite need is recognized. When eight members of the Five Towns Branch sat down together to assess sources of help for the teacher we felt we were talking in a vacuum. We found we couldn't discuss "help" as an abstract topic, but had to think of it in terms of "help to do what?"

From our individual experiences we assembled a composite class and a composite teacher in a composite school—not to be confused with any particular class, or teacher, or school. In this more or less average situation we tried to show the teacher seeking for, and sometimes finding, sources of help.

MISS SMITH FINISHED READING THE anecdotal records given her by the first-grade teacher and sat looking at the room that would soon be bubbling with thirty or more active second graders. Many of them she had known by sight last year, and now, having read Miss Brown's records, she felt she knew them a little better. She had already met freckled, red-headed Jimmy. In fact she had talked with Jimmy several times when his playground behavior marred the general peace and harmony, not to mention the lives and limbs of innocent, or not so innocent, bystanders. She hadn't known that Jimmy was adopted, or that he was "boarded out" for extended periods each year while his foster parents traveled.

She had noticed frail little Peter, who always stayed by himself, carefully removed from even the fringes of any active

play. Now she learned that his reading level was high fifth grade, and that his science interests and information were extremely advanced.

She looked through the cards again, peopling the empty room with silent images of the children she could name and vague shadows of the others. They weren't thirty second graders any more. They were Jimmy and Peter; Marie, who had cerebral palsy and couldn't talk much yet; Ed, a polio victim who came to school in a wheel chair; Alice and Dorothy, the twins, bright and cooperative; and on and on, down to the new entrants — unknown quantities, represented by test scores. Last came the German boy, with no records at all, just a seven year old, whose admission slip bore a penciled notation in the principal's handwriting, "Has been in this country two weeks. Speaks no English."

Miss Smith knew that the proper attitude was to think of the situation as a stimulating challenge, but she found it hard to hold the thought. It kept slipping into a feeling of helplessness. "Just

Five Towns ACE is composed of members in neighboring towns in the New York Area. Discussants for this article were: Reporter, Hazel Corson, Aileen Robinson, Elma Jane Peek, Edgewood School, Scarsdale; Gladys Neale, Scarsdale; Joy Piza, Hartsdale; Isabel Ralston, Tuckahoe; Mable Richards, Bronxville; Alberta Terwilliger, Scarsdale.

take the problem of Ed and his wheel chair," she thought. "No way to get up stairs. How can I see that he gets experiences in music? What about gym? And oh my goodness—fire drills!"

Faced with the certainty that she couldn't handle the fire drill situation alone, Miss Smith went to make an appointment with the principal.

Miss Smith found it paid to talk about her problems. Probably if she had kept her talking on the level of being sorry she had problems, she might not have received much help, or would not have recognized it when she received it. By actively trying to find a solution, or even to get suggestions, Miss Smith stumbled into sources of help she had never imagined existed, and of course there were always the familiar ones she had used.

The Principal and Other Teachers

It happened like this. The lunch hour that same day buzzed with the usual after vacation news and gradually shifted into the usual before-school shop talk. Miss Smith was lucky enough, or perplexed enough, to get a word in edgewise. "... and he doesn't speak a word of English," was distinctly audible. It won a moment of silence, a shower of questions, and the rewarding information that Mr. Jones, one of the new teachers, spoke German.

Mr. Jones was very much interested in helping. He found time to meet Ruddy the first day of school, and a way to make Ruddy feel he had found a friend who spoke his own language. Later Mr. Jones visited Miss Smith's group. He talked to Ruddy in German, while twenty-nine round-eyed second graders listened to the magic process whereby melodious but unintelligible sounds changed into a fascinating description of Ruddy's school in Germany, and the games he played there. When Ruddy in turn visited Mr. Jones' class he made new friends in an

older group, and soon everyone was helping him learn to speak and read English.

It was the principal who suggested the way out for Eddie and his wheel chair during fire drills. She enlisted the aid of several responsible strong fifth graders and their teacher. Together they worked out a procedure whereby Eddie got himself and his wheel chair to a special station, and two of the fifth graders helped him the rest of the way. After a few walk-through practices everyone felt that this arrangement would work, and it did.

There were still problems connected with Eddie and his wheel chair, but they seemed to solve themselves, with a little help, chiefly because Eddie took such a matter-of-fact attitude toward his handicap. He liked going to the gym with his group and helping to keep score, joining in whenever he could, or just being an interested, "participating" spectator. Miss Smith even found herself forgetting about the wheel chair now and then.

"I don't know what I can do with Jimmy," said Miss Abbott, the gym teacher, one day. "He is so much bigger and stronger than the other children. He really isn't interested in doing the kinds of things the second graders like to do in gym, and they aren't ready to do the things he would like to do. It's an almost impossible situation. What can we do?"

"I've noticed that he plays with some of Mrs. Clark's boys on the playground," replied Miss Smith. "Why can't he go to gym with them, instead of with his own group? There are quite a few boys and some girls in the third grade who can keep him down to size."

That proved to be a workable suggestion. The greater physical activity appealed to Jimmy. He found he couldn't bully the third graders as he did the second. It took only a few bitter lessons

from his physical peers to show him that it was more fun to play fairly and be accepted, than to be a poor sport and be made to take the consequences.

Building on the work started by the kindergarten and first grade teachers, Miss Smith continued to have conferences with Jimmy's foster parents. After two years of tactful suggestion they were beginning to realize Jimmy's need for greater security and more consistent handling, although they still didn't seem to be able to do anything about it. They did, partly by a lucky chance, leave Jimmy in an excellent home situation when they went on their usual winter trip. For the first time in his life, Jimmy found himself in a "normal" home environment, with a calm understanding mother, and several "brothers and sisters" who were willing to share their home with him, but would take little nonsense along with it.

Case Study Conferences

In a case study conference, Jimmy and his difficulties were brought before the staff. Other teachers were able to handle the many incidents arising around Jimmy with greater understanding. In time there were a number of people helping with Jimmy. The school psychologist had made a friendly contact with him, and saw him occasionally. Through her efforts his foster parents agreed to let him go to the Family Service organization for play therapy, although they couldn't bring themselves to be consistent in this either.

Miss Smith realized that Jimmy's problems had been at least seven years in the making, and she didn't expect a transformation in a few weeks. It was lucky she didn't. The Jimmys of this world present a constant challenge. It is well for a teacher to remember that she doesn't face the challenge alone.

The school psychologist also helped with the problem of Marie, who had a speech handicap resulting from cerebral palsy. Marie's parents didn't know about the special therapy and speech training at the cerebral palsy clinic in a nearby community, but the school psychologist did. Several afternoons each week Marie attended these special classes, and once again Miss Smith had the security of feeling that one more child was receiving as much help as could be given her.

The Parents

"Thank Heaven for parents like Mrs. Henry," sighed Miss Smith. She had just had a visit from her room mother. It seems that several of the mothers had been talking about how many more children there were this year, and how difficult it must be to handle them. Although these particular mothers had had no teaching experience, they were used to children, and thought there must be some way they could help out now and then. What could they do?

Miss Smith and Mrs. Henry talked it over. They decided that it would be wonderful to have a mother or two on hand at times when there were to be cooking experiences, for example. They would be helpful in supervising the rolling out of dough and the construction of gingerbread boys. They could help guard little fingers from being burned on the oven, and put salve on those that got burned in spite of their best efforts. They would be valuable on trips, as usual. They could come in and help with such wholesale activities as making favors and nut cups for Community Service and Junior Red Cross.

They arranged that Mrs. Henry would get a list of volunteers and Miss Smith would call Mrs. Henry several days in advance of the times she needed help. Both Miss Smith and Mrs. Henry were

to learn stern lessons about human nature. They found an occasional mother who would call at the last minute to say she just had to have her hair done right then and please get someone else, or who didn't even call—not to mention the mother whose unusual ideas made her something of a responsibility. These were the exceptions, to be taken in stride. By far the greater number offered real help, and felt they gained added insight into their children's needs and development as they worked with Miss Smith and the group.

The Town Library

The day came when Miss Smith realized that she had been so concerned with the problems of the handicapped children in her group that she hadn't done as much as she might about the gifted children in the class. For the most part they took care of themselves well enough, they were learning rapidly, and usually found a book to read or painted a picture while they waited for the others. Was that enough? As Miss Smith thought about it she saw that they too had problems—not like Sammy, who couldn't seem to learn to read or write, but real enough growing-up problems.

Peter was undoubtedly the genius of the class, but a handicapped genius, who didn't yet realize that the other seven year olds weren't understanding his explanations of how scientists would one day build a man-made satellite just outside the earth's atmosphere. As an adult, Peter would meet people of his own mental level, but in the meantime, how could he establish contact with his own age group?

Alice was bright, too. She was already realizing that she could do better than the other children in most things, and was inclined to be insufferably priggish about it. She was beginning to introduce

a kind of competition that the others would be better off without.

There were several others who were ready for broader experiences. They had finished the books in the class library and were asking for more. Where could the teacher get them? After all, school budgets have their limitations.

The town library helped out in this area. Miss Smith and the librarian in the children's department worked out a list and display of books second graders are interested in, allowing for plenty of range. More than that, Miss Smith could take numbers of books to school under special arrangements for classroom use.

"It is doing a lot for Alice," Miss Smith observed to Miss Brown. "She is one of the librarians. It gives her a job she likes to do, and she is learning that if she tries to boss the other children too much they will go to one of the other librarians for help. She doesn't like to be left without customers."

Community Resource File

The community resource file reached a stage of completion that year. It had been a joint undertaking of parents and teachers, managed by the PTA, who did the work. There had been considerable work on this project in discussions at PTA meetings and staff meetings. When the letters explaining final plans were sent out many people were already familiar with the main idea. Many parents, and even some who had no children in school, sent in material for the cards that listed the hobbies, interests, material for displays, travel movies, collections, and all the other things they were willing to share with children.

The resource file was like another efficient committee member to Mrs. Thomas, the PTA chairman in charge of display cases. The display cases were one of the centers of interest in the school

for many children. When the third grades were studying Indians, there were Indian rugs, pottery, weapons, and utensils borrowed from a museum. A collection of dolls in costume delighted all the girls in school and furnished inspiration for the fourth grades in their study of other lands. A long procession of things rare and beautiful, informative and interesting, strange and wonderful, had made its way in and out of the display cases. Each had added its quota of information or appreciation. Mrs. Thomas had secured material from museums, business offices, libraries, and friends. Now she had new resources to tap in her own neighborhood.

Many others used the resource file as a ready source of help and additional information. The Astronomy Club found a parent with an interest in stars and planets, and a telescope. The Costume Committee found mothers who could help make costumes for school plays. Many teachers were able to borrow things that added meaning and reality to some topic or experience—a Polish costume, German woodcarvings, books and bits of interesting things from all over the world.

Miss Smith used the resource file and found it most useful. Incidentally she found that not all the resources were in the file. One morning Mr. Swithers accompanied his son to school just as another boy arrived with a collection of pebbles he had picked up at the brook. Mr. Swithers told the boys about the different kinds of pebbles, and also about the ledge that outcropped at one end of the playground. All the second graders began to be interested in rocks. Peter, the young genius, started a rock collection, and several of the other boys followed suit. It was one of the few times Peter had had a real interest in common with any of his classmates. Miss Smith was glad to see that when Peter

went on a trip with his parents he brought back rock specimens, not only for his own collection, but for his friends as well.

Mr. Swithers, by the way, had not thought his interest in geology important enough to enter in the file.

Inter-School Sharing

Miss Smith served on a school committee whose duty was to bring outside talent into the school. Part of this program was made possible by a fund supplied by the school board, sometimes increased by the PTA. One year the program provided a professional marionette group; the Indian artist who sang, danced, and told the stories of his people; and a woman who brought a bird circus, and made the children more aware of the birds native to the locality.

Several neighboring schools were interested in this type of program. Problems connected with it had been given special study by a committee from the Branch ACE. Members of the committee previewed available talent, and worked out a method of sharing information about programs that were particularly adapted to children.

Some delightful programs were supplied without charge through the educational services of various organizations. Miss Smith's class was particularly interested in a group of animal visitors who accompanied a staff member from a neighboring zoo. Interest in animals comes naturally to most children. The box turtle, skunk, and hamster were not at all perturbed by admiring groups of children. The talk by the staff member added to the children's understanding of their pets and other animals, and cleared up much misinformation. Hamsters became popular pets in several rooms and homes. The pair of hamsters in Miss Smith's room were another interest that Peter shared.

One committee member knew the children's editor in a publishing house. Through her, the committee arranged a number of informal programs centered around children's literature. Sometimes an author met small groups of children in the library for a story hour or to talk about books. An illustrator of children's books drew pictures for another group.

Still other visitors included an Arctic explorer, who gave the children a feeling of what life in the Arctic was like. Guests from far countries talked about their homelands, and often started contacts with children in foreign lands.

In talking with upper grade teachers in the building, Miss Smith found that the Children's Theater was popular with children of upper grades. This program, sponsored entirely by the PTA, brought three plays a season to children of the town. Teachers reported that their groups enjoyed reading together the story of whatever play was coming. It not only stimulated reading interest, but the children learned that they enjoyed the play more completely if they knew the story ahead of time.

Older boys and girls in the school were interested in the window painting contest arranged by the local Chamber of Commerce. Originally started as an attempt to do something constructive about vandalism connected with Halloween, this project had grown into an all-out activity. Together with school, scout, and home Halloween programs it helped to turn imagination and energy into more constructive channels.

The Village Recreation Department

Since the school population had grown larger, and the playground area had remained static, after school play became more of a problem. The school's program of after school games provided supervision for some groups of children.

The village recreation department provided supervision for some seasonal games, such as baseball. The Rotary Club arranged a program of roller skating at several school playgrounds. All of the programs were scheduled during times for which the school had no direct responsibility, yet each in its way contributed to the life of the school. Satisfying and constructive play and leisure time activities in out-of-school hours play an important part in the child's whole reaction to life at home and school.

Professional Organizations

In staff meeting discussions Miss Smith found that all the teachers had problems very much like those that confronted her. Everyone was concerned about how to help the slow learning child get started in the learning process; how to help the gifted child make the most of his ability and get along with others; how to help all children have a satisfying, well-rounded school experience. Everyone felt the need of help in dealing with the playground and classroom incidents whose successful solution can mean so much in the process of growing up.

Professional organizations gave help in these areas by providing opportunities for teachers to sit down together and discuss their common problems. The elementary school curriculum committee planned a series of meetings. The administration managed some released time for the steering committee and arranged for the schools to close earlier on two afternoons on which meetings were held. Teachers met in groups of from ten to fifteen. Since they themselves had previously selected the topics to be discussed, and the groups were small enough to permit general participation, there was a real interchange of ideas.

In these meetings teachers were able

to pool their own resources. They arranged for communication between groups so that the work of one section could benefit all the others. A group working on field trips made available to the others a list of places in the vicinity that had much to offer children. The information about each place included the name and telephone number of the person to call, the things to be seen there, and the grade levels that might be interested in making the visit.

Other groups made available their conclusions on "Developing Moral and Spiritual Values," "Visual Aids," "The Gifted Child," "Materials and Methods for the Slow Learning Child."

The work of these committees furnished few pat answers or immediate solutions to pressing questions. Perhaps their greatest contribution was to help teachers recognize the universality of their problems, and to accept the fact that they would have to be solved a little at a time.

As Miss Smith and the other teachers in the system felt the pressure of the inflationary trend on their salaries, they turned to their local teachers' association for help. An association committee studied the salary question and conferred with the school board. The local association was helped in its work by the state and national associations, who were presenting to the general public the facts about teachers' salaries and the effect on the teaching profession.

The teachers' associations were also helping to alert the general public all

over the country to the pending increase in school populations. Their continued efforts in publicizing the coming crisis gave emphasis to the work of local administrations and school boards as they made public their studies of the anticipated local increases and sought support for a building program.

Here again there were no easy answers or quick amicable accord. Honest differences of opinion as well as divergent interests had to find a common meeting ground as the school board, the administration, the teaching staff, and the community increasingly worked together.

The Wealth Around Us

We are too often inclined to limit our list of resources to those that are tangible and material—the estimated worth of the school plant, the amount of taxable real estate behind each child of school age. These are valuable resources, but they often are the ones we can do little about except after long-time planning and working with the whole community.

On the other hand, we have all about us a wealth of human resources. Human resources are so much a part of the environment that we may fail to be aware of what we are using, or what we are failing to use.

Each school has to study and develop its own resources in terms of its own environment and needs. The three basic ingredients are the recognized need, the ability to communicate the need, and the feeling of cooperation that starts in the classroom.

THEY SAY TEACHERS HOLD THE FUTURE OF OUR COUNTRY
in their hands
Within their hearts they have the song
God made the resilient instrument upon which they play
The true song hath a pleasant voice
The child and his maker are one.

—EDNA B. ROWE

Straightening Our Own Thinking

AS WE LISTEN TO ALL THE PLANS FOR world peace—all the conflicting testimony and charges and countercharges—how are we to come to the best decision as to what our action should be?

Perhaps it is wise to begin by defining what thinking is, for we often *think* we think when we only recall past experiences and make a judgment from them. Thinking occurs when an organism meets, or recognizes and solves a problem. In order to do this we do recall past experiences but reorganize them in a new pattern different from that in which they were experienced.

Most humans, even highly intellectual individuals, do not think in many situations until forced to do so because other methods fail to bring a successful solution of the problem. There is much less real thinking going on in the world than many of us believe. This is why professional politicians and many people skilled in the use of propaganda find it comparatively easy to influence the "thought" of people. We listen, not too closely, to their statements, and, if they appeal to us, we accept them. We even may go out and try to gain converts. If the statements do not appeal to us, we reject them—all without any real reason.

Much race prejudice and religious intolerance occur because individuals are influenced, directly or indirectly, by others. When forced to think clearly and impartially, they cannot defend their position.

Often we rely on friends or persons we respect to do our thinking for us. This is often done unconsciously and we

become aware of it only when we are asked the basis for our belief or action. Then our reply is, "Why, 'everyone' thinks that is so," or, "'They' all do it." If this answer is not accepted then we are forced to recall experiences from our past, rearrange them in such a fashion as to come to a solution which will support our statement. Sometimes we may be successful; sometimes we may surprise ourselves, if we are honest, by discovering that what we "thought" we thought was not really thinking at all.

In order to think straight it is most important to guard against staying in a rut—of being a creature of habit. There is little or no thinking occurring during habitual acts. We must keep our minds open for new problems, new difficulties, and new solutions.

We all have developed attitudes which lend individual meanings to any situation. We should be on guard not to let our attitude "color" our thinking to such an extent that we come to false conclusions. After we have thought through a problem we should check and verify our conclusion to be sure it is valid.

PERHAPS WE SHOULD TAKE A CLUE FROM the young child who is constantly asking *what, why*. As we grow older we sometimes are inclined to take things for granted. If we ask ourselves these questions and try to answer them, drawing on our past experiences, recalling facts and rearranging them, weighing one against the other, until a new constellation of ideas is formed which supplies the answer to the question, then we are really thinking.—SELINDA MCCAULLEY, *clinical psychologist, Philadelphia*.

Children have two languages—a language of words which they often use with inadequate skill, or through which they most skillfully may hide their real thoughts and needs; and a language of total behavior by which they unknowingly reveal needs, desires and feelings.

WE, TEACHERS AND PARENTS, CANNOT actually understand what a child is trying to say unless we learn to “hear” both of his languages. Every child is trying to help us to understand him. We need much more skill in interpreting his language of behavior. Once in a long time a six-year-old will be able to say in words, “The circle time is too long,” but *every time* the discussion grows too long, small squirming bodies proclaim the fact. That is the definition of “too long” for any child or group.

When a child wants to be heard he tries to secure attention. If ignored he speaks louder, he yells if necessary. Through their behavior children frequently have to “yell” too. Johnny pinches baby brother. Mother says, “If you pinch baby again I’ll slap your hands.” We would not say to a child “shut up” constantly. Through this action we are making him use behavior that yells. If we can “hear” when the child “speaks” softly, he need not be forced to yell. Small indications of emotional unadjustment are gentle requests for help. If we recognize them and work on the little problems, big ones can be avoided.

What Children Have Told Us

Mary Ann (seven years old) made only prosaic houses and “designs” when she used paint or crayon. When suggestions were given to help her make pictures tell a story, her consistent com-

Children Speak

ment was, “I can’t make a man,” (or whatever was suggested). After much encouragement and planning she consented to illustrate a story about an elephant. While working on the picture she asked, “What does an elephant’s mouth look like?” “How are those things (tusks) fastened on?” “Does an elephant have eyebrows?” I hadn’t even thought of those details. The group proclaimed her elephant a masterpiece. After the great acclaim she said, “Well, I guess it must be pretty good.” Can we help Mary Ann to set standards which she can achieve?

Sam wanted to play checkers. He played with Susan one morning and won. Sam was completely happy over his victory and Susan was a good sport. The next morning Sam played Beth. Beth, with her last man, jumped Sam’s two remaining men. Sam flung the checker men across the room and ran to a corner and cried. Sam probably never could express in words what this episode explained dramatically. Can we help Sam learn that he can lose a game and still not lose himself?

As Trudy sat in the second grade she was becoming more and more reluctant and withdrawing. Chronologically she was as old as most of the children in the group. Socially, emotionally, intellectually, she was much younger. She could not participate successfully in the discussions and plans of the group, enjoy their games, or get in on their free play. Experimentally she was placed with a group of younger children. Within a few days she began to take part in the activities and conversations. Left permanently in the younger group she be-

Blanche Verbeck is assistant professor of education in the University School, Ohio State University, Columbus.

By BLANCHE VERBECK

Through Behavior

came a fairly good participant in all of the group affairs. She asserted herself to have turns at experiences, skipped about the room, laughed at funny things, and appeared to be comfortable and happy. She began to progress better in her academic work. Trudy had not been able to tell us that she was beyond her depth, she did not know what the trouble was, but her behavior had indicated all was not well. Are we willing to experiment to discover a child's needs?

Elaine was out-of-sorts when she went home from school. "What is the trouble?" asked her mother. She told her mother that it took her so long to eat lunch that she didn't have time for the dessert, and she felt that none of the children liked her. The next morning she had a temperature. Her mother called the school to see if we knew of any upsetting experience Elaine had had. Could the emotions cause the temperature, or was her physical condition causing the emotional disturbance? The following morning her brother stopped in to tell us that Elaine was in the hospital for an appendectomy. It is a wise parent who listens to what her child says and from the clues sets to work to find the meaning of them.

Patty breezed in every morning on her toes. Whatever her friends suggested she was pleased to do. Everyone liked Patty and Patty liked everyone. When Patty had a job to do she did it in a straightforward businesslike manner. When Patty didn't know an answer she said so and felt no guilt about it. Patty never once walked up and said, "Everything is fine with me," but that is what her behavior told us every day. No doubt through all her early years Patty's parents had

been reading the signs and saying, "These things are good for Patty. We will do more of them. These other things are not good. We will try to keep away from them."

Observations Lead To Understanding

We all know of the contributions to the understanding of children made by the consistent study of skilled observers. Although all parents and teachers are not trained in the techniques of observation, we do know that if we observe children and think about the things we see we gain much insight into the patterns and problems of child growth, development, and behavior. *Children* are our greatest help in understanding children. It was not some abstract theory that made us aware of the concept of readiness in learning. It was the observation of the responses of children in learning situations which tipped us off. Once alerted we began to watch children, to note evidences of readiness for an experience. We recorded these evidences and eventually there was a list which offered a key for the observation of other children, individually or in groups. Now teachers and parents everywhere can say, "These are the things to note in deciding when a child is ready for an experience." While observation of children will reveal a general pattern of growth—emotional, social, intellectual, or physical—it also is the surest way to see that every child is different from every other child. When are these differences to be accepted as the individual pattern of development or behavior? When are they to be matters of concern?

Timmy was a bright little fellow in first grade. He had a great store of information and an enormous desire for learning. Most of the children were happy reading their preprimers and primers, but not Timmy. He could not tolerate

the innane content. He lugged home science books for mother to read to him. Timmy scarcely learned to read at all in the first grade, nor yet in the second. In the third and fourth grades he cut his reading teeth on pretty mature fare. At the end of fourth grade he was reading more skillfully than many children who had made good progress in learning to read during first and second grades.

Children can help us to understand and help other children. They frequently can help work out the problems of their peers with greater understanding of the need than adults can. Often they are able to point out the important factor because their point of view is nearer that of the child facing the problem.

Sue was trying to work a problem on the abacounter. She couldn't comprehend how to do it. The teacher tried to help. Sue was becoming confused and blocked in her thinking. She couldn't give up. Jane said quietly, "I can help you. Just trade two of these for those two," and she exchanged two counters in one row for two in another. It made an easier grouping. Sue finished her problem, not with complete understanding but with a feeling of satisfaction.

Martin had much trouble losing his temper. The climax came one morning when he lost his temper on the playground and struck another child with a board. When the teacher came to investigate he shouted, "I did it in self-defense! I did it in self-defense!" The group sat down to discuss "What is legitimate self-defense?" and "How can a child learn to control his temper?" The teacher asked, "How many of you boys and girls sometimes get very angry?" Almost every hand went up. The teacher then said, "We don't see when you people are angry. How do you keep from showing that you are angry?" Several children explained their methods of control.

One boy said, "When I get mad at someone I just go away from him." A very self-disciplined little girl said, "I get angry, but I just get something to do and work hard at it." Another said, "When I get angry I hit something."

A Creative Outlook

Children have a fresh and creative outlook on problems. Many times adults are inhibited in their attack upon a problem because of the ruts of habit and tradition. A first grade several years ago suggested a plan which I have used frequently since. Confronted with the problem of how to have time in the school day for all the things they wanted to do, the group sat down to consider ways and means. Out of the combined thinking came the suggestion from one child that part of the group could have mid-morning rest while others had their reading group and then change about. The plan has worked successfully in many groups since. Someone in the second-grade group last year said, "The plan is good, but it makes rest too long or reading too short." Several agreed, and devised the idea of setting the play clock to indicate the time for getting up. The resting group got up at the indicated time and went about other work until the reading group finished. Incidentally, the children took more individual and group responsibility in having a good rest period.

It is children themselves who are best able to let us know what is important to them. Children have keen interests, great curiosity, and an insatiable appetite for learning. Where these characteristics are nourished, where children are encouraged to help plan the curriculum, to help select the group study, to determine what is important in solving their problems, the teacher has an ever ready source of help in making school experiences meet the needs of the group.

How Can We Communicate?

First we must have something of importance to communicate and then we must consider some of the techniques for making ourselves clear. Cassie Moorman is an elementary principal in the Springfield, Missouri, Public Schools.

TO BE ABLE TO COMMUNICATE IDEAS and purposes effectively and intelligently is an art neither quickly nor easily acquired. Progress toward mastery requires constantly working for deeper understanding of people, for greater skill in the uses of language, for the willingness of spirit to welcome the ideas and opinions of others, and for the sincere desire to achieve a meeting of minds.

The teacher will need to draw upon all these skills when she discusses children's progress in school with their parents. She may well heed the words of an old adage which warns:

"If your lips would keep from slips

Five things observe with care:

Of whom you speak, to whom you speak,
And how, and when, and where."

The teacher who wishes to establish a friendly, wholesome, and understanding relationship with parents must know the child, must know the parent and the home background, must be certain of worthy purposes to be achieved, must be able to choose words wisely and use them well, and must know when and where to confer with parents.

Obviously, mastery of the art of effective communication is a big task. It requires the expenditure of much time and effort and the development of many skills. The rewards are great, however. The best public relations result from satisfying communication between par-

ents and teachers. Conflicting purposes, fear of what the other person may think or say or do, inability to express ideas in words readily understood by the other person—all these are blocks which have raised barriers between parents and teachers. Unless teachers are able to remove these barriers, or better still are able to prevent their building, they cannot do a good job of teaching children. And good teaching cannot be confined within the four walls of the classroom. Teachers need the help and understanding of parents, and they need to be able to communicate with parents to gain this help and understanding.

Get Acquainted With the Child

Before the teacher can discuss a child's progress intelligently, the first task is to become acquainted with the child. Many sources of help are available. He can learn much about the child through conversation with him, by listening to his conversation with other children, and by observing how he works and plays. School records help, too, but they require careful study and interpretation. Help can be had from teachers who have worked previously with the child. Through all honorable means the teacher must learn what he can about the child.

An invaluable source of information is the home. The teacher can learn about the child's life outside the school and about the family of which he is a member. Home life that is altered by death, divorce, or employment that keeps one or both parents away from the home much of the time may affect, to a great extent, the child's behavior at school.



Photo by Majernik, New York Times

The teacher should know about the child in the family—his experiences, talents, and capabilities.

The teacher should know whether or not within the family circle the child's impulses are unduly curbed or indulged. He should know whether or not the economic status of the family insures a certain degree of security and well-being. He needs to know about the child's experiences and interests, about his talents and capabilities. He needs to know what kind of companionships the child keeps. The teacher should make an effort to learn of his aesthetic impulses and sense of values. He needs to know if there

have existed unusual periods in physical growth and health. Knowledge of these and many other pertinent data is necessary in order to be able to measure growth in these aspects. Parents are the best sources of information of this kind. Hence teachers need to be able to establish rapport with them and to win their confidence in order that communication may be mutually helpful.

The teacher must know the parent, also, if he is to be able to understand the child first and then to discuss his progress

and needs with the parent. By virtue of the profession, he must take the initiative. The teacher may see the parent at times when he is unable to "put his best foot forward." If he senses that the parent is not emotionally stable, he must consider whether or not the child's behavior or ability to concentrate upon school activities are thereby affected. Or the teacher may discover clues to the child's sudden outbursts or persistent withdrawals. He should understand how an overzealous parent may tend to push the child into frustrations or into paths of achievement by fair means or foul; or how a jealous parent may do equal harm by causing the child to seek satisfaction in unfair competition. He should be alert to how an overprotective parent may do harm by defending the child in his failures to such an extent as to cause him to lose, or fail to gain, a sense of the worth of effort. He should know that a parent who faces facts and strives to improve situations is a fortress of strength and encouragement to the child in meeting the problems in his daily living. It is of the utmost importance that the teacher know what kind of parent belongs to the child, if he is to be able to communicate with that parent.

Words and Manner

Knowing the child with his abilities, attitudes, interests, and frustrations and knowing the parent with his emotions, ambitions, and aspirations, the teacher is equipping himself to do a good job of communicating with the parent. But knowledge of this kind is not enough. He needs further, to be sure that genuine concern for the child and his progress is evident to the parent and that both his manner and words express friendliness and sincerity. He must learn to rub shoulders with parents of different attitudes and backgrounds and to talk down-

to-earth with them. Thus he calls forth a responsive attitude from them.

The teacher needs to think about his own speech. When talking with parents, he should use a vocabulary, the meaning of which is clear, avoiding the use of educational terms that may confuse the parent. Many professional people are guilty of such errors of judgment. Recently a patient consulted her family physician and listened to his technical diagnosis of her minor ailment. Feeling dissatisfaction in spite of confidence in the doctor, she asked, "Now, Doctor, in MY language, what ails me?"

Parents do not always feel sufficiently free to respond as frankly to the teacher. Yet "pedagogy" may defeat the very purpose of the conference. For example, the teacher may speak of the "whole child." Of course, the parent knows the child is whole. What he doesn't know is that the teacher means the term to include the child's health, his abilities, his interests, his drives, and his frustrations. Or the teacher may speak of the child's "readiness." If he explains that some children mature more rapidly than others, physically, mentally, and socially, in simple non-pedagogical terms, parents can readily see why all children are not ready to begin certain learning activities at the same time. John's mother knows that John learned to talk at least three months earlier than Jim did but that Jim now outtalks John.

If the teacher speaks of "individual differences," he should explain the meaning by showing how he uses many materials and activities at various maturity levels to care for these differences. It is not difficult for parents to understand that some children read with less effort and more rapidly than others. They can see that some children's abilities fall within fields other than reading and that each ability is worthy and desirable.

If the teacher says he wishes to encourage children to think "critically," again the parent needs to understand the many skills involved in critical thinking. If he says the child is "creative," he must explain the meaning by showing bits of the child's creative achievements in ideas or with objects.

Where Shall We Meet?

The teacher must give thought to the time and place for conferences with parents. He cannot depend upon an occasional note or quarterly report to be sufficient to do the job. He needs to watch for opportunities to send home examples of work well done with a brief comment of praise, or if the case may be, a paper showing wherein the child needs further help. A piece of handcraft, a kindness shown a playmate, a letter of invitation neatly written offer opportunities for communication between parent and teacher. A very brief note, written in simple language, a telephone call, or a casual conversation can serve to help develop a feeling of mutuality of purpose and interest. The teacher should welcome the opportunity to seek help and advice from the parent when the child is having a trying time either in his studies or in personality adjustments. And the schoolroom is not necessarily the best place for every conference. The teacher should not expect the parent always to come to him. A visit in the child's home at times unembarrassing to the parent, or an exchange of a few words on the street, at a store, or wherever their paths meet, offer opportunities to discuss the child's needs and progress.

Rarely is there a teacher who can depend entirely upon his own ability and insight to acquire the knowledge and skills necessary to communicate effectively. More often, he must turn to others for suggestions and help. But,

fortunately, that help is forthcoming. He may turn to the principal, who, because of experience in working with children and adults, and because of overall view of the educational program, can give advice and assistance. He can turn to co-workers and receive help by their suggestions and experiences. He can gain information by reading professional materials which are rich in such aids.

The teacher needs, also, to exercise the skills he acquires, and so learn by doing. While on the job, he must express ideas and purposes frequently and clearly. Anecdotal reports and notes to be included in cumulative records must be brief, concise, and clear as to meaning. When working on curriculum plans, he must give attention to his method of putting ideas into writing and thereby learn to say much in a few words. He must welcome opportunities to address groups of parents, teachers, and other adults. He may have many a misgiving at the outset, but with each added experience confidence will increase.

In a Nutshell

To be able to communicate effectively with parents, the teacher must have a worthy purpose; he must know the child of whom he speaks; he must know and have rapport with the parent; he must use a language which leaves no doubt as to his meaning; he must watch for opportunities to confer with parents at times and places convenient to both; and he must seek and accept advice and help from others when advice and help are needed. The art of effective communication is not easily or quickly mastered. It requires very great patience, perseverance, and understanding of human nature. But continued effort can insure success, and that success, when attained, is both exceedingly gratifying and rewarding.

Evaluation—Everybody's Business

Who can help me evaluate the children with whom I work? Everybody! Wanda Robertson, professor of education, University of Utah, Salt Lake City, gives the reasons why.

ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT FEATURES of any educational program is the kind of evaluation that accompanies it. No school which seeks to constructively guide and direct the growth and development of children can be sure of the success of its program without an adequate system of appraisal. Neither can parents or community leaders know what has been accomplished, nor how to proceed with next steps, without satisfactory means of knowing how well they have succeeded in their efforts.

Today, educators are generally agreed that good evaluation is an essential part of good teaching. It consists of the tools and methods which help us to see what has been done in order that we may do the job better. But what constitutes good teaching, and subsequently good evaluation, depends upon the educational point of view of the school. When the role of evaluation is viewed and accepted in its broadest sense, it is doubtful whether any other part of the educational program offers so many sources of help to teachers, parents, and even the children themselves; or which provides so many opportunities for everyone concerned to work together in guiding the growth and development of boys and girls.

Throughout the history of American education, society has imposed its demands upon the school. And with these demands comes the need for different types of evaluation instruments and techniques. Today is no exception. The complex and hazardous problems created

by twentieth-century living have resulted in demands never before heard of in education. As schools have accepted the challenge of helping children grow into more intelligent and responsible citizens in a democracy, so has the need grown for better appraisal techniques related to children's social understandings, attitudes, and behaviors. The development of critical thinking, ability to tackle and solve problems which have consequence for the learner and others, growth in human relationships, and concern for the welfare of others presents only a few of the vital social skills demanded of schools today.

Research in the field of child growth and development has likewise called for better ways of understanding and interpreting what we now know about the growth patterns of boys and girls. The emergence of a broader and deeper insight into the role of the emotions in learning, the significance of developmental tasks, and the concept of the "whole" child, has forced a more thorough-going consideration of many of the so-called "intangibles" of growth and learning. And as social psychologists, anthropologists, and sociologists have pointed up the need for a better understanding of the child's home and community background, as a means of taking into account the total environment in which he grows and develops, the need for still other evaluation skills and methods has become a major concern in education.

More People In the Process

But the modern concept of evaluation not only calls for newer and more effective instruments of appraisal; it also requires that more people participate in the process. Children are growing all the time—with or without our guidance. They are learning some of their most lasting and important ways of thinking and behaving on the playground, on the street corner, in the church, with the gang, and in the home. Moreover, research shows that many of the child's basic ways of regarding himself, of relating himself to other people, of working and playing, and of looking at the world in general, are shaped in his early years before he ever comes to school for the first time.

Since all of life educates, teachers must be just as aware of the kinds of experiences children have outside as well as inside the school. If they are to guide the development of children most effectively, they need to know everything that is possible to learn about the child. This requires a knowledge of the child's physical well-being, his personal problems, his peer relationships, his interests and hobbies, his attitudes toward school and the people with whom he works and plays, and the values he brings to school from his home and neighborhood. But it is apparent at the outset that teachers cannot do this job alone. Such a task demands the services of many people—parents, psychologists, club leaders, scout masters, and even the neighborhood grocer.

Because parents have such a store of information about the child's early background, as well as his out-of-school activities, it stands to reason that a good program of evaluation cannot operate without them. It is the parent who can cast light on the cause of Mary's ill-tempered

behavior resulting from a breakfast squabble, or for George's dislike of reading. It is also the parent who can provide information about Tom's real interests, his reaction to his teacher and classmates, or his concern about playing on the team. And it is surely the parent who can give the most important help in understanding the child's general growth pattern by supplying the teacher with such facts as when he cut his teeth, how soon he learned to walk and talk, and similar information.

The Child's Role In Evaluation

Today, we are coming increasingly to see that children also play a highly significant role in the field of evaluation. Observations of classmates and other children often yield invaluable information concerning certain boys and girls. Discussion of classroom and playground problems frequently helps individual children; as well as the group, to analyze and interpret their feelings and ways of behaving. A pat on the back or a nod of approval from a friend goes far to help Jimmy over a difficult spot, and therefore becomes a part of knowing how to help Jimmy in other situations.

But important as all these other people are in the evaluation process, it is questionable whether anyone is as important as the child himself. If he is to grow in subject matter skills, in self-understanding, in his ability to get along with others, and in his understanding and appreciation of other people, it is obvious that he must be invited to participate in the process of appraising his own gains. When the first-grade child calls out in glee "I catch" as he recognizes a new word in his new reader; or when fifth-grade John volunteers the information that he believes he is growing in controlling his temper tantrums—learning has taken place. But even more im-

portant, these children know that learning has occurred. As a result, future learnings are made easier.

New Methods of Appraisal

Evaluation which utilizes many people is no longer regarded as a process by which one person tells another what has been accomplished. Nor is it the results obtained on a test or the A B C's on the report card. Instead, it is the mutual sharing by parents, teachers, and children after using many appraisal techniques. Furthermore, it is a continuous process which lasts throughout life since there is never a time when any person has fully "arrived."

The emergence of the present-day concept of evaluation has resulted in the development of many new instruments and methods of appraisal, though much still remains to be done in this field. Parent-teacher conferences are common-place in many schools throughout the land. Parent meetings and study groups constitute an important part of learning about children and interpreting the school's program. Parents and community workers are participating even more widely in classroom excursions and in sharing their experiences and talents with various school groups. Parent-teacher organizations are working diligently to bring about a closer understanding between the home and school. And parents, like teachers, are growing in their skills of observing and recording the behavior of children.

Health records, interest inventories, participation schedules, test results, records of out-of-school activities, and reading lists provide varied kinds of information about children. Diaries, autobiographies, and original stories reveal many personality problems. Written descriptions about "What I Would Like to Be When I Grow Up," "The Kind of Person

I Like for a Friend," or "If I Could Have Three Wishes" serve as further projective techniques for understanding not only what the child would like in other people, but what he would like to be and have himself.

Dramatic play, free choosing time activities, role playing, and the use of the sociogram offer still more evidence that is helpful in understanding and guiding children. Discussion of incidents involving problems of human relations, or analyzing stories in which different kinds of behavior are portrayed sometimes help individual children identify themselves with the characters being discussed. Knowing some of the reasons why these characters behave as they do often helps many boys and girls to better understand their own feelings and the reasons for their own behavior. Similarly, knowing how these storybook characters solved their problems is sometimes suggestive of ways they might solve their own. And finally, the use of self-appraisal conferences and the writing of one's own report letter to parents do much to enable the child to appraise his own progress.

From the foregoing it is clear that there are many sources to which parents, teachers, and children can turn for help in diagnosing the child's needs and guiding his future growth. Observations are made of the ways children actually practice such social concepts as sharing, critical thinking, respect, responsibility, cooperation, and fair play in real situations, and on jobs that count. The persons working with children then have a solid basis on which to appraise and guide future growth and development.

Characteristics of Good Evaluation

That there are many available techniques for understanding and helping children is readily apparent. However,

if they are to be used wisely, two important characteristics of a good program of evaluation must be kept in mind.

Evaluation which seeks to guide as well as to measure children's growth must be continuous. The child is guided in his next steps partly in terms of the growth he has already made. What he accomplishes in today's reading lesson should provide the basis for what he will be expected to accomplish in tomorrow's. Building readiness for each learning act, then, becomes an integral part of the evaluation process. To force a child to walk before he is able, or to insist that he read from a book when he lacks the necessary language skills or eye development for reading is not only wasteful in time but dangerous for future learnings.

Goals and purposes toward which the child is being guided must be clearly defined and accepted. It is not enough that the child is growing; it is the direction toward which he is growing that counts. Committed as we are to the belief that democratic values and practices provide the best way of life, learning experiences must be selected accordingly. The social direction of the curriculum must be geared toward helping each child develop a wholesome respect for himself, an abiding concern for other people, the ability to think critically and to use his skills and information in the solution of real problems.

Such an evaluation program presupposes much cooperative planning in the setting of goals. As children and teachers approach new tasks they need constantly to ask: "What do we want to accomplish? Why is this problem significant? How can we best proceed?" And as the project gets underway they need to ask: "How are we coming? How pertinent are our findings? What are their implications? What new sources of information are available? How can we improve our ways of working?" Without such goal setting and continuous appraisal, the most effective learning cannot take place.

Evaluation which seeks to measure the total growth and development of children in today's world is a highly complex process. Its results depend in large measure upon the adequacy of the entire curriculum with respect to the social direction it affords, and the wealth of balanced experiences it provides. Its effectiveness will rest upon its concern for the individuality of each child as he meets his developmental tasks and moves at his own rate in learning. It is a diagnostic process in which teachers, pupils, and parents assess their individual and joint accomplishments. And it is a group endeavor in which all persons concerned with understanding and improving learning and behavior participate in the program of appraisal.

THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL IS NOT A "LOWER" SCHOOL BUT A school for young children. The secondary school is a school for adolescents—neither higher nor lower than any other school. The university is a special kind of school for adults. There is no higher school than the nursery school and kindergarten. There is no higher schooling than that in the first grade, the sixth grade or any other grade. There is no hierarchy of height in modern education.

—HAROLD BENJAMIN

A Story Festival

Children need a world in which people respect one another. With this purpose the staff of the Escola Graduada, a privately operated American school in Sao Paulo, Brazil, started plans for a story festival. But the home and community were drawn into the plans and other major purposes of the project were carried out. E. Clayton Seeley was a teacher in this school and is now doing graduate work at Teachers College, Columbia University, New York City.

IN THE STORY FESTIVAL RECENTLY HELD in the Escola Graduada, mothers, representing thirteen different nationalities, came to school one afternoon to share their country's fables, myths, folk tales, and biographies with the boys and girls. The staging was simple but effective as each storyteller mother dressed in costume from her own region, displayed objects that helped tell the stories such as: maps, dolls, pictures, toys, and of course, children's books either in their original language or in translated form. Many of these materials were later borrowed by the children for further examination and exploration.

In order to create as intimate a relationship as possible between the storyteller and her listeners, the children sat on the floor around her in small groups of fifteen or twenty. These groups were organized by age level and spaced throughout the school facilities to help alleviate noise and confusion.

The children anticipated the festival eagerly and were given an opportunity to choose the countries they were most interested in from the countries available to their age group; however, all listened to stories about the "Saci" of Brazil. The various countries represented were: Syria, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Bulgaria, Germany, England, India, China,

Poland, Italy, Finland, and Brazil. The United States was purposely omitted.

Fables with their morals, myths with their consistent portrayal of the various Gods whom men have turned to for help and worship, folk tales with their persisting values and universally accepted beliefs and simple appeal to children and adults alike, and biography portraying the significance of real individuals and the ways in which they have met and conquered universal problems give great meaning to experiences in creating an awareness of the world and its problems. They helped all concerned with the festival to grow in their own social understanding. Children's comments serve to illustrate:

"That was an exciting story. I didn't know it was like that once upon a time in Finland."

"I liked best the things you showed us from China. They helped to tell the story."

"Your dress was so pretty—just like the one in the story."

"I didn't know they had 'Saci' in Brazil. I guess they are all over."

"'Saci' isn't real, but neither is Santa Claus and they're good anyway."

Then from the storytellers came such comments as:

"Do have one again. I loved telling stories to the children."

"Make the story periods longer next time."

"Have fathers come in also to tell stories."

"I thank you for letting me tell stories about my country (Poland). It is such a sad country now—do you understand? Then I thank you for all of Poland."

"Your children are happy children. They liked my country (China). I want to come again to your school."

Yes, there is real understanding when a child sits close to a Chinese lady and projects himself into the characterization of the stories she is telling, enthralled with her accent and charmed by the colloquialisms and vocabulary.

Creating Enjoyment For Literature

Although the Escola Graduada, Sao Paulo, enjoyed many favorable cultural factors that were used for increasing the children's interest in books and literature, it also had many unfavorable conditions as well. The recreational reading program had been a disorganized and passive part of the school program. Books were scattered and poorly organized and funds were very low for purchasing new books and magazines. Difficulties in securing import permits and a favorable monetary exchange for ordering new books posed a real problem. Most of the available books in Brazil were written in Portuguese which was not easily read by many of the pupils. The municipal library facilities were not readily available to most of the children, and the teachers had little training in selecting and promoting children's literature.

However, there was a bright side to the picture also. Twenty-eight nationality groups were represented in the school. Many students were readily conversant in three or four languages. The parents had a good feeling toward the school and were willing and eager to offer their services. The broadness of the natural school environment stimulated much information seeking and honest inquisitiveness. The supervisor had training and

interest in children's literature and a sincere desire to make school as meaningful as possible. The elementary school faculty was a closely knit group who were eager to learn and give of their time in studying the problems which confronted the school.

As the attention was focused on the existing recreational reading problem, a committee was formed to study the situation. This committee rolled up its sleeves and soon one teacher accepted the job of librarian, space was found (in the supervisor's office) for a central elementary department library, shelves were built and more books were donated from the community at large to the existing collection. Then these books were all classified, and arranged on shelves. Regular library hours were made available to the children, and the interest in recreational reading began to grow.

One important section of the new library was filled with professional books and magazines for teachers.

When this preliminary work was running smoothly, the committee evaluated the factors favorable to the reading program that existed in the community and decided upon a story festival. Tentative plans were drawn up and presented to the rest of the faculty and interested parents for discussion. As these plans were modified slightly and adopted, the committee then proceeded to turn them into reality.

The real enjoyments of literature were readily evidenced in many ways. The children's faces and general physical tone portrayed enjoyment as they listened attentively to the storytellers weaving the webs of their stories and bringing their faraway country's literature to life in the minds of the children. The children entered freely into conversation with the storytellers and eagerly offered answers or solutions to the problems posed in the

stories. Even the "sophisticated" older boys and girls found themselves drawn into the spirit of the festival and projected themselves into the story situations enjoying their "self-portrayal" in the animals, heroes, and other characters with whom they became acquainted. The storytellers were good and held their group's attention through many vivid and thrilling experiences in the folk tales, fables, myths, and adventures that they related. In conversations on the playground and in the classrooms, the children told and re-told their favorite stories to their friends who had chosen to hear about different countries. This exchange of experiences led to the many stories being embellished with the individual's own impressions as they were told and re-told during the following weeks.

Spontaneous dramatic play in which some children lived the story situations over and over again was also an important outgrowth. Then, of course, there was a new interest shown in the recently reorganized school library. In fact, the exchange of personal books containing these stories or others like them even surpassed the comics in popularity for a few days.

Bringing Home Into School

Developing a community which is sympathetic with the schools is generally thought of as a long range job but the intermediate steps necessary may be met by planning school activities that can utilize the many talents of the home and the other vast resources of the community. So the Escola Graduada Story Festival Committee presented its recreational reading program and story festival to the community and invited suggestions from parents and teachers alike. Names of mothers who might like to participate were collected. They were invited to come to school and talk over

the plans with the committee. The mothers who responded favorably to the invitation came several times to help in planning the festival and were a real part of the experience. These mothers were particularly helpful in determining their role in the festival according to their particular aptitudes. Not all parents thought they were capable of telling stories but expressed a desire to help in other ways. These parents along with other members of the faculty not on the committee volunteered for the many helper jobs that are so necessary when working with a large number of children.

After the festival, careful evaluation was the next logical step. The participating parents reported in terms of their own enjoyment and growth as well as by anecdotal records of the children's reactions that they had observed. The entire elementary school faculty discussed the experience freely from many points of view. They made definite recommendations to the committee by listing the values observed, judging the degree of success in meeting objectives of the festival, pointing out difficulties that had arisen, and suggesting improvements that might be incorporated in future activities. The committee then compiled and filed all of the evaluations for future reference.

The story festival was the first activity of its kind attempted in many years, but judging from the enthusiasm of all concerned—school, home, and community—it will not be the last. It was unanimously felt that although there was room for much improvement, significant growth had taken place toward reaching each of the four major objectives: social development, enjoyment of literature, creating in the community an awareness and understanding of the school's program, and bringing the home into the school.

WE NEED TO WRITE

. . . to keep a record of our work

. . . to improve our tomorrow

. . . just for the fun of it

. . . to let others know

Compiled by May I. Young



We made a horse and named it Smokey.



We wrote stories about Smokey.



The authors autographed their books.



We found other stories about horses.

... to keep a record of our work

By DOROTHY KOCH

MY SMALL UNGRADED GROUP OF BOYS and girls was showing tremendous interest in drawing and painting on the easel. I was very glad to encourage this interest, since drawing is so important today as a means of communicating ideas and since it is most certainly a form of creation.

Because there was only one easel and so many of us to use it, we had to take turns, the rest of us painting at our desks or on the two tables or on the floor. In order that each might know when it was his turn to work at the easel, we made a chart and placed it on the bulletin board:

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday
A. M.	John George	Gail Billy	Raymond Margo
P. M.	Carol Frances	Harry Joe	Anna Emanuel
	Thursday	Friday	
A. M.	Edward Mary	Gail Billy	
P. M.	Lynne Gwen	James Bob	

Gail and Billy were the youngest ones; they seemed to need the large easel work greatly; hence they were given extra time.

The chart record helped a great deal—indeed, it was a necessity for the peace and happiness of the group. But soon dissatisfaction with the long wait for

their turn and with the discomfort of floor painting crept in. The budget would not permit ordering more easels, so our "What shall we do about it?" discussion finally brought out the decision to make our own.

Having found out that charts and recorded ideas were valuable for later reference, we soon had stories as an outcome of our planning and discussing. Titles headed each chart: *Materials We Need; Suggestions as to Measurements; Who Will Do What; Improving Our Work.*

The actual construction work was going very quickly. Everyone brought in something; everyone helped with the work; everyone had ideas about ways of making our easels sturdy and good-looking.

Our Easel

We needed another easel. George brought two boxes. We nailed the boxes together with a board between. We tried to use the easel. It wobbled. Then we nailed little boards on top of the boxes. We tried to use the easel, our painting board slipped off. So we nailed a board on the edge for a ledge. Now we can really use our easel.

Since there is a wide range of reading abilities in my class, some stories were easier, and others more difficult than this one. The reading skills seemed to progress as rapidly as the construction, probably because they were acquired functionally. The stories were the satisfaction of the interest, the personal needs, and then the enjoyment of the entire class. Interpreting their experiences by printed symbols made for better understanding.

Cooperating with May I. Young, supervisor, Philadelphia Public Schools, in writing this article were classroom teachers, principals, and supervisors—adults working with different age-levels, in different economic and social environments, in both public and private schools: From the Philadelphia Public Schools—Dorothy Koch and Eugene C. Korbeck, Rowen School; Theresa Lobis and Irene Esterline, McClure School; Grace Van Voorhees and Grace K. Kemp of the Stevens School; Lucetta Sharp, Mrs. Kenneth L. Jones, and the fourth grade at the Agnes Irwin Lower School, Wynnewood, Pennsylvania. The pictures were taken by A. Adele Rudolph.

The pictures painted at the easels were also sometimes the basis for stories and read by the artist. Not always, but when the child wished to express himself in words as well as in picture. We made a large book of some of the pictures and stories. Sometimes there was just a caption under the picture. Again, there would be a short simple story. At other times a personal experience might be recounted.

Drawing, writing, and reading have all become very desirable tools for these children in communicating their ideas. They are very happy to read their

thoughts to others in the group and to have them read by the others. They realize that their ideas are being recorded and the desire for writing becomes as great as the desire for drawing. So, through his own experience, the child learns the basic concept of reading as getting the author's meaning from the printed page.

For the want of an easel—so many things followed: the cooperative planning and working together, the developing of writing and reading skills, and an astonishing blossoming of truly creative ideas in creative pictures and creative writings.

... to improve our tomorrow

By THERESA LOBIS

Between the cleaning up and the packing
When at day's end we are so sublime
Comes a pause in the day's occupations
That is known as the Diary-time.

—*With apologies to Longfellow.*

DIARIES HAVE COME OF AGE IN MY fourth grade. "Don't forget we have to write in our diaries, Mrs. L." is something I have been hearing rather regularly these days. I have found it a most satisfactory way of looking at our day. How mirror-like are these evaluations! They reflect not only what the child has done, but teacher, too.

Just as making good plans is an essential part of education, so is evaluation. Teachers, whether or not they realize it, are constantly evaluating. "Nancy, you read much better today." "Allan, your writing is improving." And just as children help to plan their school day, so should they help to evaluate their day. Children want to know and should know how they are progressing. There is nothing like success to give greater impetus to our efforts. By the same token,

a child has to know when he is not measuring up, so that he can try to do something about it.

In the keeping of a diary, a child makes good use of all the writing skills that are being taught. In the day-by-day description of what a child has done, both teacher and child are guided to find clues as to next steps. The child expresses something of what he has learned that day, something of what he has accomplished, something of what he has enjoyed. The teacher, on the other hand, notes what particular writing skills the individual child needs to develop. Does the child have a fairly wide vocabulary? Can he formulate good sentences? Does he have a knowledge of capitalization and punctuation (at his grade level)? Do his sentences follow a proper sequence?

The diary serves yet another purpose. It reveals to the teacher the interests of her children which can be a valuable aid in future lesson planning and unit preparation.

We cannot leave this diary writing to

chance. It must be directed if it is to serve its purpose. Over and beyond the writing skills that have to be taught, we should set up some criteria for the kind of evaluation the diary should contain. It should be as specific as possible: "I learned how to take and use a ten in subtraction today" rather than "I did my arithmetic today." The diary should be meaningful to the child. He should be able to look back and see what he has learned and achieved over a period of time—to see his growth. How heartening when Carole, who had been struggling

with reading all last term, writes, "Reading is easy, now that I know how." Or when Paul writes: "The teacher said I was kind today because I wanted to make something for Sally who is absent." Or when Joe puts in his diary: "I didn't do all my work today. I'll try to do better tomorrow."

When I actually can see the changes that are taking place, when I see my children evaluating themselves and being forthright and sincere, then I know the diary has made a valuable contribution in working out pupil-teacher objectives.

... just for the fun of it

By GRACE VAN VOORHEES

"I NEVER LIKED WRITING STORIES AND letters before. Now it's my hobby," exclaimed Fred after his latest story had been received with great enthusiasm by his classmates. Today was like any other day—five or six authors in the class had volunteered to present their finished stories or poems to the class. Fred's change of attitude toward creative writing is a common one in the class. The most significant contributing factor in this change of attitude seems to spring from the absence of pressure to write at a given signal and on a given topic. Desire to record ideas is carrying over into "free time" and home time. Anytime is writing time! There is no limitation as to how often, how much, or the plot. Therefore—they *like* to write!

Of course this class has definite periods when they all settle down to work in their individual story books, but a variety of activities takes place. For one child, a new story or poem may be in the making; for another an illustration for a story dreamed up at home may take form on the next blank page; or some very

careful child may be rereading his stories to make corrections in spelling or punctuation. Then through some formal teaching to meet his needs, the errors are now more apparent to him.

Ideas, however, are stressed above composition or language skills; thus spelling, punctuation, and form become lesser objectives in the child's mind. Therefore he is released to write more fluently. Informal instruction is given individually during the story-writing time in spelling, use of dictionary, phrasing, clarification of ideas. Formal teaching of needed knowledge to perfect the skills is given in separate language arts periods. These needs are noted as the teacher reviews the children's books—usually once in two weeks. Errors in spelling are corrected and put into a completely individual list at the back of the book for future reference. No book is marked with red or blue pencil to note errors, for one aim is to establish a respect for the child's work. (No adult appreciates having his masterpiece all marked up with red and blue crayon!)

The children were requested to list some of the sources from which they gleaned ideas for stories. Imagination, actual experiences, conversations, a title from a book or story, movies, television, and radio were the most frequently named sources. These are listed here in the order of their frequency in the listings. Hardly a day goes by without a couple of children telling the teacher very confidentially that they have a brand new idea for a story. Each day the class listens to any author whose story is "ready to be heard." Standards have been established by the class, and the child decides for himself when he is ready to present his work.

Continued stories are quite popular. The author introduces a new chapter with a thumbnail sketch of the preceding

chapter. Genuine enthusiasm for each other's work exists—as evidenced by such requests as: "Could Joe *Please* read his story? I read it, and it's terrific!"

These ten year olds are fired with the desire to write, as is any group that is free and is experiencing success and approval. Growth in vocabulary, spelling, handwriting, and form is very evident. Themes from fairyland to blood-curdling mysteries have been explored by this group, offering enrichment to the life of the class. Children will write when they are free to express ideas as they are inspired to do so. Inspiration does not come to all at any given time as we well know. When freedom of expression comes first, good form seems to follow easily.

... to let others know

By LUCETTA SHARP

IN THE EARLY DAYS OF THE FALL TERM, the fourth grade considered its aims for the year. In a kind of seminar, the teacher had been frank in voicing her goals and asked the children to discuss theirs. Oral discussion—a kind of tossing the subject in the air to see it from all sides—has seemed helpful to us as a preliminary to writing. As a group the children clarified the meaning of the word "aim." They had just returned from a vigorous soccer game during recess period. Mrs. Jones asked them, "Why were you playing soccer today?" "I wanted to get warm," said one.

"I just wanted to play," said another.

"I wanted to beat the third grade."

"I wanted to play and get a goal."

An aim was, then, something for which one wanted to try.

The discussion proceeded to the fact that individual's aims were different; and that they were different for a reason. "Gladys said she wanted to get warm and Lee said that she just wanted to play," said Mrs. Jones.

"Well," spoke Mollie, "they are two different people. People aren't alike."

"We're individuals," supplied Kathy.

"Then," said Mrs. Jones, "our aims will not be the same. Edwina's aims for this year in fourth grade will not be the same as Charlotte's. Toby's aims will not be the same as Bettsy's. I wonder if anyone has anything in mind, right now, which he would very much like to accomplish this year." Twenty-one hands shot up eagerly. Wendy wanted to get her blue ribbon in skating. With a wide grin and smiling eyes, Judy said, "I

would like to stop having so many fights with my sister."

"I would like to get better in my work," said Bunny.

After each one had an opportunity to voice one aim, Mrs. Jones said, "Let's spend just a few minutes thinking about our aims, and then let's put our thoughts on paper. Just put them down; don't worry about spelling; do the best you can with it. Put your ideas in sentences or just a few words. We'll correct all mistakes and arrange the thoughts later. Now it's important to get your ideas down."

In a short time the children were writing. Some children listed their aims, as many as fifteen, as few as four. Some wrote paragraphs. Mollie, who had said that people were not alike, wrote "I want to have just as much fun as I am now all year. In school and at home. I want to be *respected* more than last year by *elduldets*. I want to *improve* in all my school work. I want to *improve* in sports too. I want to be loved or liked by every one, too. In that I will have to do it to others."

"I want to *thinck harder*. I want to be *abbl* to *mangge* things," said Toby.

"I want to have a good *dispshtion*," contributed Bettsy.

Edwina, "I don't want to be lazy."

Number 5 for Joanie was "I would like to teach my hamster to do tricks."

Lucy Lee's number 6 was "I want to like all the people in class because I feel *haribol* if I don't like all the people."

Gladys, who is sensitive and intense, wrote, "I don't want to go too far in things."

Judy wrote, "do what my mother and father say with *on* fooling."

Lee wanted to be a "*palight* little girl."

Julie wanted to improve her arithmetic.

A critical word or two might be said about this method. The atmosphere of acceptance, to be effective, should be a condition of the child's total school experience, not just an aspect of the writing period. There is a danger in the use of oral discussion, in that stereotyped responses may result, yet if there is awareness of the differences of expression among the children it can be fruitful in that it stimulates thinking. Forty different ideas appeared in the compositions of the group of twenty-one fourth graders and the quality was individual, both as to content and form. In exploring and clarifying their thoughts under guidance these children found written expression a satisfying experience.

A CHILD WILL NO SOONER TURN OUT THE POCKETS OF HIS MIND TO one he does not trust than a shy little boy will turn out the treasures of his trousers pocket to a stranger. He has so many wonderings, questions, fears, and dreams, and so few adult friends with whom he can share them. This is why the elementary teacher is turning so eagerly to creative writing. It is another way of getting to know children.—MAUREE APPLEGATE in *Helping Children Write*.

The Handwriting Dilemma

Manuscript or cursive? When should a change over take place? How should handwriting be improved? Jerome Leavitt, assistant professor of education, Portland State Extension Center, Portland, Oregon, and Isabel Lewis, instructor, Northwestern University, Evanston, Illinois, turned to research findings to see if there were answers.

A FATHER SAYS, "WHY DON'T THEY teach children to write these days? I can't read this letter from my daughter at camp. Of course, my own writing isn't very clear, but . . ."

A mother talks to her son's teacher, "Miss Brown, isn't Jimmy going to learn to write at all? His father thinks that printing is so babyish."

And a teacher says, "Last year I tried lots of board practice and writing exercises. The children's writing papers looked fine, but their spelling lists and their stories were no better than if I hadn't spent all that time trying to teach handwriting. Maybe this year I'll just let them write. I don't know what to do."

And finally, a child, "Well, I do try, but it's so hard to stay on the line, and think about size and everything, when I'm in a hurry to say something."

Will you agree that remarks like these are not uncommon today? Essential as handwriting is in the communication skills, teachers are puzzled as to the most effective procedures in teaching it; children are often tense or all too casual in their handwriting, and parents sometimes seek in vain for adequate answers to their questions about manuscript writing and school practices in teaching it.

There is no definitive answer to these questions, but perhaps help may be secured from an examination of the status of the teaching of handwriting today, and trends in the last quarter century.

Almost all schools begin the teaching of handwriting in the first grade, although there is a wide divergence among methods used. According to a study made by Polkingshorne¹ in 1946, 89 per cent begin with manuscript writing. One-half of the schools change to cursive writing in grade three or above, and approximately the same number use commercially prepared systems. One-fifth use manuscript writing throughout the grades.

It is significant that most recent studies of the teaching of handwriting are concerned with the problem of type of writing to teach at the various levels. Manuscript or cursive—when, how, and how much, and, above all, why? These seem to be the basic concerns in this area today.

Proponents of each type of writing have advanced many arguments in their favor. Some can be classed as speculation, and some are supported by research, most of which is concerned with the *why* and not the *how* of teaching handwriting. Let us see what has been found out about the relative effectiveness of the two types as to speed, quality, ease in expression, and assistance in the teaching of spelling and reading.

While there is some variation in the findings of studies on speed, most authorities agree that manuscript writing is

¹ Polkingshorne, Ada R., "Current Practices in Teaching Handwriting," *Elementary School Journal*, 47: 218-24, December 1946.

faster for young children, and that cursive appears to be faster for older children and adults.

Every teacher of young children who has used both methods in beginning writing will concur with research findings that manuscript writing is more legible in the beginning stages than is cursive. While the quality of manuscript writing is higher in the lower grades, more research is needed to indicate which type is superior, quality-wise, in the upper grades.

Since handwriting needs to be seen in proper focus as a functional communication skill, and not as an isolated drill subject, ease of expression is of great importance. Without a doubt, in the studies available, manuscript writing in every case provided greater opportunity for children to express themselves in the primary grades. Studies at present are not available above this level.

The amount of assistance offered by each type of writing in learning to spell and to read is difficult to determine, since so many other factors are involved. However, from the findings reported nothing has been proved regarding the advantages of cursive writing to the teaching of spelling, but a number of studies do indicate that manuscript writing has helped. We may surmise that greater ease of expression is a factor.

Probably the obviousness of the advantage of manuscript writing to reading is the reason few studies have been made in this area. The cursive advocates do not claim the assistance of cursive writing to reading.

The problem of transfer from one type of writing to another has been considered in a number of studies, with little general agreement at this point. In actual practice, most schools favor manuscript writing in grades one and two, and many make the transfer in grade

three. Several studies seem to indicate that the transfer may be handled with ease in either direction, after the child has acquired skill and fluency in one type. Probably the transition is more easily made from manuscript to cursive than in the reverse direction.

Since these findings deal with which type of writing to teach, they are of little direct help in the area of how to teach. Trends in this area are of interest, however. One study, made by Little² in 1943, points out the fact that there is a tendency to develop procedures that harmonize with the child's physical, mental, and emotional growth. Other writers feel that the emphasis upon the child's immediate needs in writing, and the de-emphasis of preparation for future needs, may serve to clarify some problems regarding teaching techniques.

Looking back, then, the studies would indicate that from the point of view of speed, quality, expression, spelling, and reading, manuscript writing should be taught and used in the primary grades. The present data might indicate that cursive writing is superior after the third grade, but more study will have to be done on the problem before one system can be proved to be more advantageous than the other for use in the higher grades. As to the effectiveness of teaching techniques, classroom teachers might well engage in some research of their own as to the efficiency of letter and word drills and of much free writing, and as to standards reasonable for each age level in speed and quality.

The questions we heard at the beginning are still echoing, it is true. Perhaps they are a little closer to being answered, since we realize that there is a substantial nucleus of research in this area, and future areas of study pointed out.

² Little, M. L., "Current Opinion, Experimentation, and Study on Handwriting Problems," *Elementary School Journal*, 43: 607-11, January 1943.

1953 STUDY CONFERENCE

April 5-10 Denver, Colorado



Theme: *Strengths and Resources
for Guiding Children*



Glenn L. Ebbardt, Denver

The Denver Committee meets to plan for your visit in April. **Left to right:** Elizabeth Lort, Chairman; Mabel Montgomery and Dorothy Roerig, Co-Chairmen; Sophie Griffith, Secretary.

DENVER PUBLIC SCHOOLS
ADMINISTRATION BUILDING
414 FOURTEENTH STREET
DENVER 2, COLORADO
KENNETH E. OBERHOLTZER, SUPERINTENDENT

December 12, 1952

Dear Fellow School Administrator:

I am happy to say, neighbor, that the Association for Childhood Education International (ACEI) will be meeting in Denver for the 1953 Study Conference, April 5 - 10. We in Denver especially want to see you and our other Midwestern and Western neighbors represented at the meeting.

My observations lead me to state that the ACEI conference is one of the most valuable and inspirational meetings which elementary school teachers, and others who are interested in young children. The annual meeting, together with the other activities continuing throughout the year, makes ACEI an important matter for your consideration as superintendent of schools. In brief, that's why I'm writing to you. I know how much you are bombarded with literature about meetings for teachers, but this meeting is definitely worthy of your interest and support!

Sincerely yours,

Kenneth E. Oberholtzer
Kenneth E. Oberholtzer
Superintendent of Schools

Mr. Oberholtzer addressed this letter to his fellow School Administrators in Colorado and adjacent States.

NEWS and REVIEWS

News HERE and THERE . . .

By FRANCES HAMILTON

New ACE Branch

Armstrong County Association for Childhood Education, Pennsylvania.

Life Member

ACEI welcomes Charles M. Rogers, Amarillo, Texas, as a life member of the Association.

ACEI Memorial Endowment Fund

The Cincinnati Kindergarten Alumnae Association has contributed \$100 to the ACEI Endowment Fund. This gift honors the memory of Mina Colburn Hilles, Orlando, Florida. Mrs. Hilles is remembered as an inspiring teacher and supervisor of kindergartens in Cincinnati. A sketch of her life accompanied the gift and will be entered in the ACEI Book of Remembrance. Her name will appear on the ACEI Roll of Honor.

Patty Smith Hill Bequest

A check for \$2500, the legacy bequeathed to ACEI by Patty Smith Hill, has been received. This is known as the Patty Smith Hill Fund and is a part of the Memorial Endowment Fund which was established in 1902. The principal is kept intact and the interest is used to further the work of the Association. The Memorial Endowment Fund grows through gifts made by groups or individuals.

Bibliography of Books for Children

Those who work with children in various situations will welcome the 1952 edition of the *Bibliography of Books for Children*. This bulletin contains the best books for children published through May 1952. They are listed and grouped under such headings as: Animals of All Kinds; Child Life in the United States; Religion; and Music. Emphasis is placed on the science section which has been greatly enlarged. Order from ACEI headquarters, 1200-15th St., NW, Washington 5, D. C. \$1.

1953-1955 Plan of Action

Every two years members of the Association for Childhood Education International

develop a plan of action as a working guide for individual members, for branches, and for the International Association. These are the steps in its development:

1) Branches, international, and life members report by means of a questionnaire on the needs of children as seen in the communities where the members live.

2) These reports in summary form are studied and discussed by the ACEI Executive Board members, major areas of need determined, and resolutions on each stated.

3) Suggested resolutions are submitted to branches, international, and life members for study.

4) At ACEI's annual meeting, delegates vote to accept or reject the resolutions and through discussion suggest ways of working that will implement the accepted resolutions.

5) Resolutions and the suggestions for action then become the official Plan of Action for the Association for the following two years.

In the development, the third step has now been reached. ACE branch presidents are urged to provide opportunities for members to discuss the areas of need and suggest ways of meeting them.

Mildred English in Germany

Mildred English, professor of education, Georgia State College for Women, Milledgeville, Georgia, is a new cultural adviser for general education in Germany. Miss English has served in Germany on two previous occasions. In her new assignment she will live and work at Bonn.

Second Anniversary of Midcentury White House Conference

The purpose of the meeting marking the second anniversary of the Midcentury White House Conference in New York City, November 30 to December 2, 1952, was to examine what has been accomplished and what must still be done to assure "for every child—a fair chance for personality development."

Participants were members of National Midcentury Committee for Children and Youth, Advisory Council on State and Local Action, Advisory Council on Participation of National Organizations, Federal Interdepartmental Committee on Children and Youth.

The National Midcentury Committee has concentrated its work for two years on implementing the findings of the Midcentury Conference. One speaker used the quotation, "He who leaves footprints in the sands of time must wear work shoes." "Work shoes" are still needed to meet the Midcentury White House Conference pledge to children and youth.

The real improvement in conditions for children and youth takes place on the local and state level. It is here that local and state branches of ACEI can best serve with other citizens in helping every child have a chance to develop a healthy personality.

Mamie W. Heinz, associate secretary, represented ACEI at this meeting.

Conference of Principals

The Department of Elementary School Principals, NEA, will hold its annual meeting, February 12-14, 1953, in Atlantic City, preceding the convention of AASA. The theme of the meeting will be "Bases for Effective Learning." The program will consist of addresses by leading educators and 21 study groups covering a wide range of subjects of interest to elementary school principals.

For information write to: Department of Elementary School Principals, NEA, 1201 16th St., N.W., Washington 6, D. C.

Brotherhood Week

The annual observance of Brotherhood Week occurs February 15-22. Three educational leaders are acting as co-chairmen of the Schools and Colleges Committee: L. D. Haskew, dean, College of Education, University of Texas; Sister Mary Madelva, president, St. Mary's College, Notre Dame; and Joseph B. Gittler, professor of anthropology and sociology, Iowa State College. They have issued the following statement:

Our forefathers not only saw the crucial necessity of unity in our American society, but also they charged education specifically to be a great unifying force in this land of ours. . . Men can dwell together in unity, but they have to learn to do it.

Address inquiries or requests for materials to the co-chairmen, 381 Fourth Ave., New York 16, N. Y.

Filmstrip on Home Life

A Child's Guide to a Parent's Mind is the subject of a new filmstrip series written by

Sally Liberman in cooperation with the National Association for Mental Health. These filmstrips are designed to stimulate thinking and discussion of parent-child relationships from childhood to adolescence. They will be of aid to parents as they seek to increase their understanding of children. For further information address The Filmstrip House, 25 Broad St., New York 4, N. Y.

Children's Books Around the World

The American Association of University Women has published a catalog of *Children's Books Around the World*. This bulletin was prepared to accompany an exhibit of 265 children's books from 52 countries. The exhibit was initiated by the Children's Library Association which, in order to obtain the books, enlisted the aid of the International Information Administration of the Department of State. The books themselves were collected through the Department's Information Centers and Public Affairs Officers overseas.

For information regarding the exhibit and copies of the bulletin, write: American Association of University Women, 1634 Eye St., N. W., Washington 6, D. C.

British Summer Schools

Summer schools for overseas students will be held at four British universities and will open a few weeks after the Coronation. The schools will be at Stratford, Oxford, London, and Edinburgh. Many Americans are expected to attend as in past years. There are usually representatives from fifteen to twenty-five countries at each course. Teachers, post-graduate students, college juniors and seniors, and others with suitable qualifications are admitted. The courses may be recognized for credits at U. S. universities and for grants under the G.I. Bill of Rights.

Opportunities to visit places of interest will be part of each course. Special efforts will be made to help visitors meet British people and to become acquainted with their British environment.

Students accepted for enrollment will have ship passage reserved for them, a special advantage this year when trans-Atlantic travel will be particularly heavy.

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More About Released Time

THE OCTOBER ISSUE OF CHILDHOOD EDUCATION carried the report of the ACEI Committee on Released Time for Teachers. Reprints of the article were sent to 6000 superintendents throughout the United States. We asked for further reports as we knew that there was still much to be said, so we herewith reprint excerpts from letters received.

A Big Item Affecting Teacher Morale

Dear Miss Carr:

We have done much talking about the released time here, but have not been able to find any workable solution. If there is one big item affecting the morale of elementary teachers these days, this is it. Only a person who has worked straight through a school day—including recesses and noon—with a roomful of live-wire youngsters, knows the toll it takes in energy.

School building programs are going to help some in eliminating this difficulty. When we have some larger rooms and rooms constructed for play, one teacher will be able to care for several groups of children during play periods and lunch time even when the weather is bad.

If college students are available they might help. Our Board of Education has set up a plan this year whereby a college student works an hour a day in a school, and the college receives \$200 a year to be applied on the student's tuition. The plan is frankly a recruitment program, with the hope that as the student becomes familiar with the school system and develops an interest in it, he may decide to teach here. Most of these students are now working during the noon hour, in order that teachers may be free to enjoy lunch and relax before beginning again.

We have had released time for a few of our general meetings, dismissing school at 2:45 in order to attend meetings at 3 o'clock. This only occurred once or twice a year, however.

As suggested in your article, the new teacher is allowed to have a visiting day. No paid substitutes are provided now, although our schools have sometimes done that. The principal must make provision for the pupils to be cared for by another teacher, or—and this is usually done—teach the class himself. Teachers in the first three grades may dismiss

fifteen minutes early as much as eight or nine times each semester for conferences with parents.

We have an annual workshop, lasting three days, but the time is before the school year begins for the children.

Parent help in supervising lunchrooms and playgrounds has been suggested here, too. A parent recently mentioned volunteer help for principals, since we have no school clerks in most of the buildings. This would allow principals to do more supervisory work and allow them to take over classes at times when teachers need a break. There is question about the wisdom of this plan, because of the confidential nature of many office matters. Clerical work can be handled better by one person who is a disinterested individual. Some things might be done by volunteer workers, such as filing enrollment cards, making out new permanent record cards, and duplicating general notices for pupils and teachers.

Here are other suggestions:

- 1. It might be well to hire an extra teacher for every school which has more than three hundred pupils. This is expensive, but would be better than driving out of the profession the qualified teachers we now have. Even in buildings such as ours, with no extra classrooms, such a teacher might have an "office" or a little corner for a desk in the small general-purpose room and go from class to class to teach. Whether there should be a specialization in such subjects as physical education or music, is a matter to be worked out in each school. Those in our group of teachers seem to feel that this would be one of the best solutions. Such a position might even be a "General Practitioner" job designed to give broad experience, and leading to administration. Every principal might be required to have one or two years of such experience before taking over a principalship.

- 2. Perhaps it would be possible to provide substitutes for teachers who are asked to do work on curriculum revision committees or other committees involving much time. This could be limited to three half-days of released time each year. (Teachers are not asked to serve on more than one major active commit-

tee now. Membership beyond that is entirely up to the teacher. We provide substitutes for a half day for an entire textbook committee at their hearing, which is held with a representative of publishing companies. We released two teachers for a full semester to write, "Cedar Rapids, our Community.")

- 3. The plan tried this year for shortening the kindergarten day to one and one-half hours for the first week could be extended to two weeks, or even three, and the time used profitably for parent-teacher conferences.

- 4. All teachers could be allowed one day for group conferences which are out of the city, in addition to those for which school is dismissed. This should not be used for school visitation.

With the large number of parents working, we must consider how the pupils will be cared for in the event that school is dismissed. It is almost necessary that we keep the children in our care, it seems, with another teacher helping when one is off duty.

Since we have reached a point where teachers hesitate to take released time when it is offered, because they cannot get everything taught, is it not time to reduce curriculum demands?

Many teachers feel that we need to eliminate some of the outside forces, the drives for various purposes, collections, announcements, and requests from other groups. If the pressure on the teacher were reduced, through smaller classes and limited curriculum demands, he could go through the present school day in a more leisurely fashion and be happy to take released time when it could be provided.

IRMA DOVEY
Principal, Jackson School
Cedar Rapids, Iowa

An All School Project Sir:
During the school year 1952-53 we are using one afternoon per month for professional inservice training and home visits. We are using *A Study of Accumulative Records* as our professional study for the year.

Our actual reason for using this project was twofold. First, because a genuine need was felt upon the part of all teachers for the interpretation and better use of the student's

accumulative folder; and secondly, as a means of developing a cohesive unit for study purposes which would bring a professional slant and, we hope, enlightenment to all members of the staff. In other words, the entire staff in the elementary school as well as high school working on one project. Time is also being arranged so that teachers on a rotating basis will have the opportunity of visiting homes. It has been our experience that home visits not only aid in solving a problem, if one exists, but more important, they seem to be one of the best means of public relations that we are able to have in the school district.

J. WILLIAM QUINN
New York Mills, N. Y.

A Basic Principle Involved

Fellow Teachers:

My reaction is that any of the suggestions are worth while provided they do not violate a basic principle of depriving the child of the full time of a teacher for which he is entitled as much as teacher is to released time. In other words, the time that a pupil has the constructive guidance of the teacher should be increased. If teachers are given released time, the work should be organized so that it would not shorten the pupils' school day or term.

We have extended our term from 180 days to 190 days, giving additional salary and using the ten days as released time for pre-school workshop, attendance at teachers' meetings and other worth-while activities.

Nothing is said in the article with regard to the percentage of increased cost. This is a factor that has to be considered when any change in policy is involved. It would add much to the weight of any proposal if costs were considered and also the sources from which necessary increases in revenue should be obtained.

W. G. PENCE
Fairfield, Iowa

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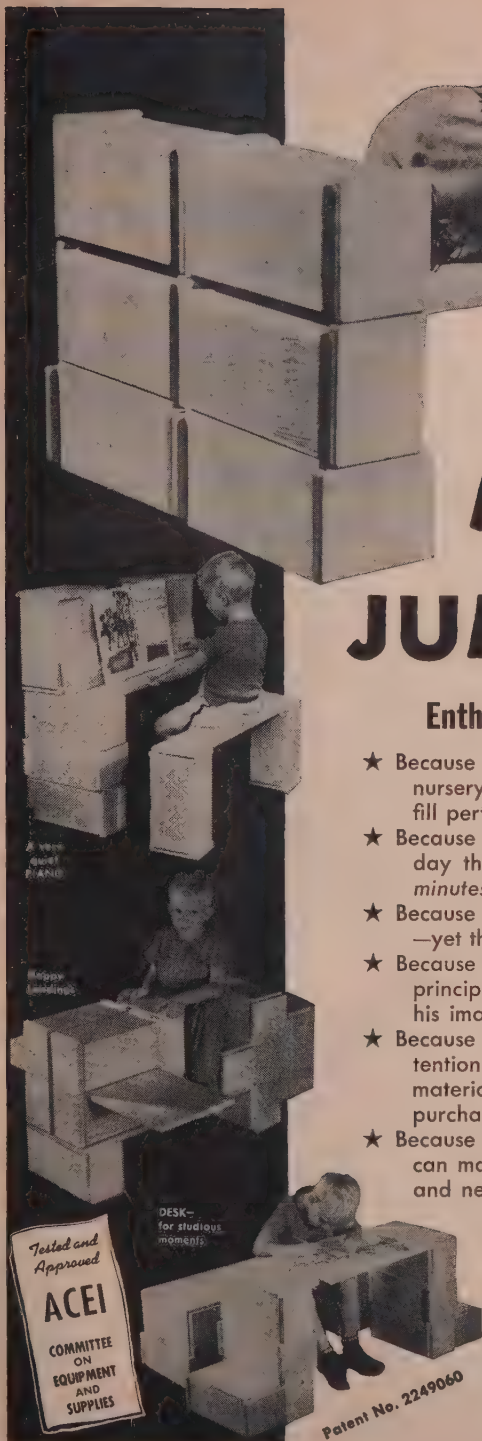
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Books for Children . . .

Editor, VERA PETERSEN

ALL TOGETHER. By Dorothy Aldis. Illustrated by Helen D. Jameson, Marjorie Flack, and Margaret Freeman. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 210 Madison Ave., 1952. Pp. 192. \$3. This is one of the most satisfactory compilations of one author's poems for children to be published in some time. Choice verses from *Everything and Anything*; *Here, There and Everywhere*; *Hop, Skip and Jump*; and *Before Things Happen* are now bound in one volume, together with ten new poems by Dorothy Aldis, just for good measure.

The pleasing thing about this compilation is that nearly all one's favorites by Dorothy Aldis are there—"I was up so tiptoe early . . .," "I am the sister of him/And he is my brother . . .," "I'm hiding, I'm hiding,/And no one knows where . . .," "Fence posts wear marshmallow hats/On a winter's day . . ." and so on, all there in one tidy volume. A good buy in genuinely child-tested verse for the nursery, kindergarten, and primary school!

A FOR THE ARK. By Roger Duvoisin. Illustrated by the author. New York: Lothrop, Lee and Shepard Co., Inc., 419 Fourth Ave., 1952. Pp. 40. \$2. The appeal, if not importance of some books, can be judged by the number of artists who have given their talents to illustrating new editions of these books. Consider the various pictorial interpretations that have been given to *Alice in Wonderland*, *The Wind in the Willows*, *A Child's Garden of Verses*, and certainly to *Mother Goose*!

ABC books have also intrigued the artists, but making an ABC book involves more than illustrating it, for each new ABC book must have an accompanying text displaying some dominant theme. It is this theme and how it is treated that determines the age group that will most enjoy the book and therefore we can find ABC books for upper grade children and adults as well as for those in the picture book stage. Roger Duvoisin's theme centers about Noah's preparation for the great flood. His *A for the Ark* is certain to bring pleasure to our four to eight year olds.

The animals advancing in alphabetical procession to the ark, provide distinguished illustrations from start to finish.

THE WONDERFUL STORY OF HOW YOU WERE BORN. By Sidonie M. Gruenberg. Illustrated by Hildegard Woodward. New York: Hanover House, 575 Madison Ave., 1952. Pp. 39. \$2. Because *The Wonderful Story of How You Were Born* is one that parents will want to use with their children themselves, this is not a book for teachers to place on the children's shelves at school, but certainly one for every teacher to know about and to have on the shelf for parents, for them to borrow. Many parents will want to have copies of their own.

As important as the book itself which, tenderly and fittingly illustrated, is intended for children from three to twelve, is the information on the inside of the book jacket. Here Mrs. Gruenberg answers questions about when and how to use the book.

"No book can possibly take the place of the parents themselves in creating the relationships between parent and child that are fundamental to the child's sound development. This book is meant to help you to develop and continue those relationships . . .

"Children differ tremendously from one another in how they approach this whole subject. Some children will ask for a lot of detail; others will want just to see pictures. Only you know your own child and can decide what he wants most at any one time, or how much detail he needs to satisfy him."

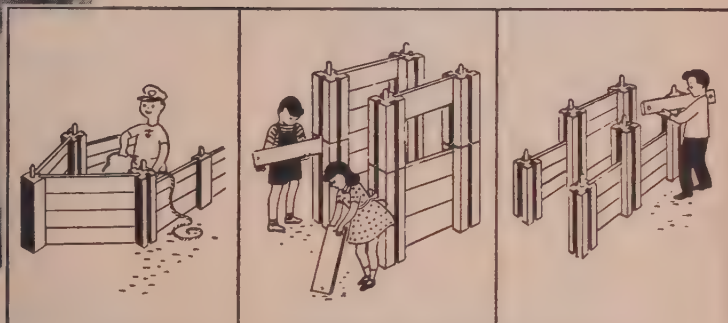
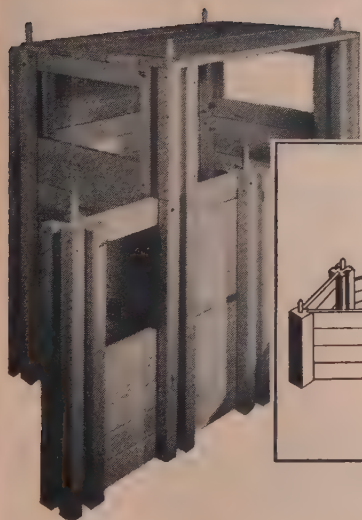
Concluding this excellent guide to parents are helpful suggestions for further reading.

BABY ANIMALS. By Garth Williams. Illustrated by the author. New York: Simon and Schuster, Inc., 1230 Sixth Ave., 1952. Pp. 22. \$1. It is a joy to handle a little book so attractively and well manufactured for young children as is the *Golden Book of Baby Animals*. The pages are of heavy coated paper that can withstand a great deal of handling.

Choosing almost entirely from the wild animals, Garth Williams has painted in a refreshingly simple and friendly style, the babies of forest, prairie, and jungle. He has made a picture book that nursery school and kindergarten children will love and one that will bring satisfaction to young readers in the first and early second grade.

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Books for Teachers . . .

Editors, WINIFRED E. BAIN
and MARIE T. COTTER

WRITING BOOKS FOR BOYS AND GIRLS.

Edited by Helen Ferris. Garden City, New York: The Junior Literary Guild, Doubleday and Co., 1952. Pp. 320. \$2.98. Two hundred sixteen present day authors tell in this volume how and why they came to write their special kind of books for boys and girls. The essays were first written for *Young Wings*, the monthly magazine of the Junior Literary Guild, in which authors and illustrators tell about themselves and their work. The articles are addressed to all ages of young readers from six to sixteen years.

The writers believe that to the young belongs the inalienable right of many kinds of excellent books. Their story of how these zestful books came to be written is a "dynamic chapter in the history of contemporary literature for children."

Editors, writers, school and children's librarians, teachers, and parents will find this unique book valuable. School administrators and teachers who are still entirely dependent upon series of reading textbooks in their schools will find it provocative and challenging. The book can be the beginning of a happy and exciting means of bringing children and good literature together.—Reviewed by MARTHA SEELING, *Wheelock College, Boston.*

YOURS WITH LOVE, KATE. By Miriam Mason. Illustrated by Barbara Cooney. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 2 Park Street, 1952. Pp. 277. \$3. This delightful book is a story of the life of Kate Douglas Wiggin. It reads like fiction largely because the author has been highly successful in making the heroine come alive as a very human, joyous, and dynamic person. Kate's early ambition was to be an actress. She became a kindergarten teacher. In an early visit to Miss Elizabeth Peabody, famous exponent of the kindergarten, her most vivid experience was that she was loaned a nightgown belonging to the great actress, Charlotte Cushman, and *slept in it*. All her life Kate was dramatic.

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She became a teacher with all the enthusiasm with which she might have acted on the stage. Pioneering in early kindergartens in the young State of California gave excellent scope for energetic performance and the personal distinction that a dramatic individual craves. It was as director of the Silver Street Kindergarten, the first free kindergarten on the West Coast, that she first won her fame. Then to secure more funds for the San Francisco Free Kindergarten Association she began writing engaging stories of children. *The Story of Patsy*, *The Birds' Christmas Carol*, *Timothy's Quest* were among the earliest. Success in writing came as a surprise to her as she had been discouraged from writing while in school. Her later life was full of travel, writing, lecturing, and civic activities, but the core of her whole life from which everything else emanated came from her devotion to children and the kindergarten.

It is timely to have this engaging book about an inspired teacher now when so many new teachers are needed. I think young people will like it and catch its enthusiasm and her concept of the value of teaching. As Kate says "Teachers are so important . . . It's not just what they teach, like arithmetic or spelling, it's what they make you love."—W.E.B.

CHILDREN AND THE CITY. By Olga Adams. Chicago: Reginald R. Isaacs, director, Michael Reese Hospital Planning Staff, 29th and Ellis Ave., 1952. Pp. 28. \$1. The publication of the brochure *Children and the City*, by Olga Adams, provides at this time an interesting link in the sequence from the pioneer days of San Francisco Free Kindergarten Association featured in *Yours with Love*, Kate, reviewed above. Olga Adams, like Kate Douglas Wiggin, is a woman whose life is organized around her devotion to children and the inspiration with which she has taught them to love life and the things of life that surround them. Living in modern times Miss Adams has developed her work by a pattern of its own which is indicated rather clearly in this published account of the way the children of the University of Chicago Kindergarten developed the study of *their city* under her guidance. That Miss Adams holds a position of high regard among civic groups is testified by the fact that *Children and the City* is sponsored by six of them. To her friends and associates in the

(Continued on page 294)



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Books for Teachers

(Continued from page 293)

ACEI it is a delight to turn the pages and find that in several of the illustrations she has been photographed with the children.—W.E.B.

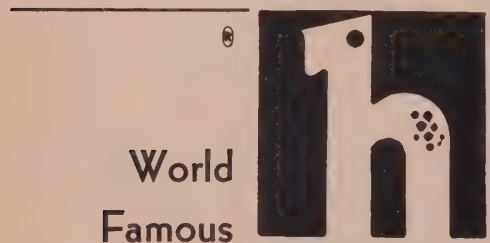
PROVIDING DEVELOPMENTAL EXPERIENCES FOR YOUNG CHILDREN. *Practical Suggestions for Teaching. Number 11. By Ada Dawson Stephens. New York: Bureau of Publications, T.C., Columbia University, 525 W. 120th St., 1952. Pp. 107. 95¢.*

"The most pressing need for today's teachers of young children is for them to be able to do a better job of coordinating all aspects of child development and behavior through an interesting goal-directed program of education, one in which learning will be a continuous process of the highest possible quality," states Ada Dawson Stephens in the preface of her practical down-to-earth booklet.

The author believes that such qualities as independence, self-initiative, resourcefulness and assuming responsibility within a group, all essential to the democratic way of life, are

not inherent in human nature but must be learned. She believes, also, that teachers of early childhood play a paramount part in helping children develop these qualities and must, themselves, be helped to understand further the facts of child development, of how children learn, and how to set up an environment to bring about these qualities. She discusses the role of the teacher emphasizing the importance of teaching *children* rather than subject matter. Her booklet contains information as well as illustrative material taken from actual situations in which teachers use materials such as music, blocks, carpentering, books, as aids to the growth and development of young children.

While there is nothing startling or new, it is gratifying to find a piece of current literature which deals with the "specific approach to the guidance of teachers in nursery schools, kindergartens, and first grade." *Providing Developmental Experiences for Young Children* should be helpful to student- and beginning-teachers as well as to parents of young children. Perhaps it will encourage teachers to sit down and write their experiences of living in a democratic environment where chil-



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dren are being helped to be good citizens at whatever age they are operating.—*Reviewed by ELIZABETH W. CAMPBELL, Wheelock College, Boston.*

EDUCATION IN RURAL COMMUNITIES.

Fifty-first Yearbook (Part 2) of the National Society for the Study of Education. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 5750 Ellis Ave., 1952. Pp. 359. \$3.50. This book gives a clear picture of what is happening to one-half of our school children—the half which lives in rural communities. During the last thirty years the effect of technology on this area has been dramatic and startling in many ways. By and large, the school has been affected far less and more unevenly than other facets of rural life.

The school which should, according to our authors, be an instrument for raising standards and enriching the lives of the people has, as a rule, fallen far short of this goal. The community has of necessity turned to other agencies for help. However, examples are given of "Community Schools" which are the heart of the community. For the most part,

these schools have come into being through the leadership of one person; a teacher, a principal, or a parent who believed in this type of school and who knew how to take counsel and get the cooperation of the entire community, including those most affected—the children themselves. These accounts are thrilling and will be an inspiration and of much practical help to those working in rural areas.

Examples are given of one-teacher schools where fine things are being done with children. The last chapter lists sources where rural teachers, educational leaders, and citizens may get help. This yearbook is a very practical and usable document.

Many people from all over the country cooperated to make the study possible. It is a library in itself—not a book to be read quickly and put aside, but a rich source to be tapped as needed. I recommend this study particularly to those who are living and working in rural communities and to all others who are interested in knowing how one-half of our children in America live and learn.—*Reviewed by BLAND BURCKHARTT, Wheelock College, Boston.*

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Over the Editor's Desk

How Many Does It Take?

The January issue of CHILDHOOD EDUCATION put us over the hump of this year. Since I was impressed with the number of articles which had been prepared cooperatively I sat down and did some figuring for the first five months. How many people had helped in preparation of material?

Well—133 people have cooperated in preparing articles, reviews of books, bulletins and pamphlets, worked on committee reports, furnished pictures.

The figure is not completely accurate for there were two committee reports included; in one case we listed the members and so counted them, but not the other. The film review centers have a varying number of people sitting in on each review but no attempt was made to determine the number.

Of the 133 about twenty percent were teachers in the classroom with children. Twenty-eight percent were in colleges and universities preparing teachers. Twenty-six percent were in public school systems as principals, supervisors, and superintendents.

The rest of the number are an assorted group including those who wrote the parent point-of-view, children, an architect-engineer, and an editor of children's publications.

But the quick survey also showed that while we are proud to have had contacts with 29 states and three countries—that we really would like to include more of you in those other places, too.

Let's hear from all parts of the world. And what about either a contribution for our manuscript file or a good suggestion? How about it—Arkansas, Connecticut, Louisiana, Maine, Mississippi, New Hampshire, Oregon, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Tennessee, and West Virginia?

Since the ACEI Study Conference is in Denver this year, surely someone from your state can be at the open editorial meeting if you are from: Idaho, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Mexico, North Dakota, Oregon, South Dakota, or Wyoming.

Sidelights On An Article

Toward the end of September we wrote a letter to Hazel Corson asking her if she could arrange for the preparation of a four-

part symposium that would "develop the different kinds of help to the individual from people within the community"—teachers help teachers, the community groups such as chamber of commerce, the administration and school board, and other groups.

We said, "You may go about this in any way that seems best and easiest to you. You may ask individuals to prepare each section or you may get ideas and work it up as a whole by yourself, or get someone else to work it up as a whole."

In exactly one month the material arrived with this note:

"I am sending you under separate cover something faintly resembling your requested symposium. It was an interesting experiment in group thinking. Just so you will know what happened—eight members of the Five Towns Branch (ACE) met to have supper and to discuss, 'Who Will Help Me?'"

"We started with your outline, and within fifteen minutes were hopelessly entangled in questions of category. We tried several other formal outlines, and didn't feel comfortable with any of them.

"Eventually we felt we should work it through from the point of view of a classroom teacher facing daily problems, and let the categories fall where they would. So everyone talked, using free association technique, and the reporter tried to take notes, feeling rather like a psychoanalyst. It's difficult to psychoanalyze a process, so I'll send in the record, amorphous, but we hope not 'inconsequential'."

How Do You Get To Know Them?

A first-grade teacher told me she started the school year with 48 children in her classroom. One afternoon she met one of her little girls all dressed up in her mother's old clothes. My friend said at that moment she realized what the crowding really meant—no chance to get really acquainted! Lack of space and number of children meant not having a dress-up time in her room—it had hampered one of her techniques for getting to know individual children. P.S. By the end of the second month another teacher was found and the group divided.

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